

Remarks

Claims 1-19 and 22-31 are pending. Claims 17, 22, and 23 have been amended. Claims 20 and 21 have been cancelled. The applicants note that according to the Office Action Summary, the drawings are objected to by the Examiner. While no amendments have been made, substitute formal drawings are submitted with this response. Appreciation is expressed for the indication of allowance of claims 1-16 and 21. In response, claim 17 has been amended to include the limitations of claims 20 and 21, and to therefore put it in condition for allowance. Claims 22 and 23 have been amended to correct their dependency.

Rejection of Claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 17-20 and 22-31 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gustafsson in view of Kihara et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,236,475 (Kihara). While the applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's arguments regarding these claims, the applicants have amended claim 17 to put it in condition for allowance in the interest of advancing prosecution of the present application. The applicants intend to pursue the previously presented claim 17, as well as additional claims, in a continuation application, and this amendment should not be considered to prejudice such a continuation. Accordingly, the applicants respectfully submit that claim 17 is allowable over Gustafsson and Kihara, taken alone or in combination. Claims 18, 19, and 21-31 depend from claim 17 and are allowable for at least this reason.

In view of the amendments and remarks set forth herein, the application is believed to be in condition for allowance and a notice to that effect is solicited. Nonetheless, should any issues remain that might be subject to resolution through a telephonic interview, the examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA, 22313-1450, on July 28, 2004.


Attorney for Applicant(s)

7/28/04
Date of Signature

Respectfully submitted,



Marc R. Ascolese
Attorney for Applicant(s)
Reg. No. 42,268
512-439-5085
512-439-5099 (fax)